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Obama says funds will aid LB

By Paul Eakins and John Canalis, Staff Writers

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In a rare moment highlighting Long Beach, President Barack Obama said Friday that his stimulus plan will help fund police overtime here.

Obama spoke in Columbus, Ohio, where he championed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

"In Long Beach, Calif., it will be able to help fund 17,000 hours of overtime for law enforcement officials who are needed in high-crime areas," Obama said.

The Long Beach Police Department has searched for ways to protect police overtime as the city grapples with a budget deficit.

Long Beach was among only a few cities highlighted in the speech.

Obama explained in the speech that Attorney General Eric Holder and the Department of Justice are making available \$2 billion in grants from the stimulus package.

"That's funding that will help communities throughout America keep their neighborhoods safer with more cops, more prosecutors, more probation officers, more radios and equipment,

more help for crime victims and more crime prevention programs for youth," Obama said. "Cities and states can apply for these funds right away, and as soon as those applications are received, the Justice Department will start getting the money out the door within 15 days."

In Long Beach, that translates into \$1.6million, about \$1 million of which is expected to fund the police overtime, city officials said.

Tom Modica, manager of government affairs, said the money will come from the federal Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant, which usually provides only \$200,000 to \$400,000 annually to Long Beach.

The grant money can only be used for "frontline law enforcement," such as overtime for crime sweeps and new equipment, Modica said.

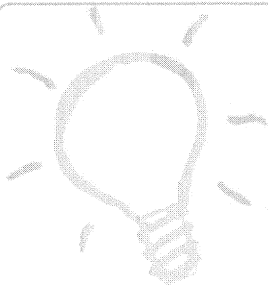
"We've used these one-time targeted dollars to address emergent crime issues," Modica said.

The \$1 million for overtime is more than 11 percent of the \$8.7 million budgeted for the police department's overtime this fiscal year, according to Braden Phillips, the police administration bureau manager.

Last year, sworn police officers worked 168,000 hours of overtime at a cost of \$9.6 million, while the department's total overtime, which includes support staff, cost \$10.4 million, he said.

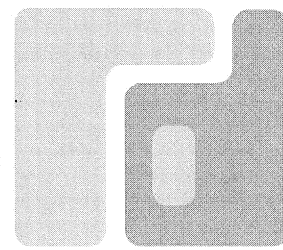
Police overtime has been a contentious issue at City Hall as officials have struggled to balance

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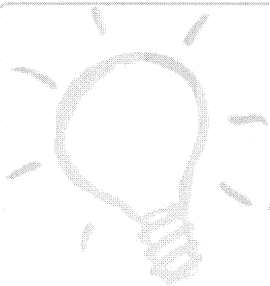
the budget in recent years, and police officials have been working to reduce overtime costs.

Aside from the \$1 million for overtime, the remaining \$600,000 may be used to replace up to 330 radios in police vehicles, Modica said.

Modica said the money can't be used to replace regular police funding, which means the police department will still have to make cuts to help the city balance out a \$19.2 million budget deficit. City Manager Pat West said the police department has to cut 2 percent from its budget, while some departments must cut up to 6 percent.

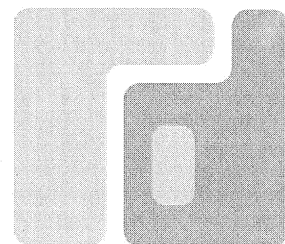
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